

Overview

In general terms, a design review application is a formal request to “allow design and site development review of all developments, signs, buildings, structures and other facilities constructed or modified in any zone where design and site development review is required in order thereby to foster a good design character through consideration of aesthetic and functional relationships to surrounding development, and in order to further enhance the city’s appearance, and the livability and usefulness of properties” (BMC 17.820.001.A). Furthermore, design review is not required for minor additions to, and remodeling of, existing structures which do not involve a change in the site design, except for buildings located within the Downtown. A design review application may be approved subject to various conditions. There are two basic types of design review conducted by the City, as follows:

1. *Design Review applications.* Applications for general design review are the most common type, and are required for projects involving the construction of new buildings or site improvements. Design review applications are considered concurrently with any other required land use permit or entitlement application submitted to the City, such as a conditional use permit, tentative parcel map, or subdivision map. Approval authority of design review applications rests with the Planning Commission and, upon appeal, the City Council. Staff and the Planning Commission have the ability to develop a set of conditions to ensure adherence to applicable City ordinances, standards, and design guidelines; improve the design of the site or building; or minimize any impacts before authorizing the development. Each application for new development will also require evaluation of impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and may require preparation of studies and other related documents, depending on the size, scope, and impacts of the project. See Chapter 17.820 of the Brentwood Municipal Code for more information related to design review applications.
2. *Administrative Design Review applications.* An administrative design review approval is a requirement of the Downtown Specific Plan when physical changes are proposed to either properties or buildings. The types of changes requiring approval include exterior building modifications (e.g., painting, veneering, new windows, etc.), modifications to existing signs or the addition of new signs, additions to existing structures up to 5,000 square feet in size, and new residential projects providing four (4) units or less. The approval is considered administrative since it is reviewed by City staff only, and not the Planning Commission or City Council. See the Downtown Specific Plan section 2.1.4 for more information pertaining to administrative design review applications.

Submittal Requirements

No application will be accepted for processing until one hard copy of the following information is submitted to the satisfaction of the Community Development Department:

1. Completed Universal Application, signed by the property owner. Alternatively, a letter of authorization from the property owner will suffice.
2. Applicable filing fees.
3. Detailed written statement describing the project and the reason for it. This should include a discussion of the site plan as well as a narrative of the architectural styles employed within the development and the overall fit of the project within the Brentwood architectural landscape.
4. Location map indicating the project site, adjacent properties, and adjacent streets.
5. Site plan of the subject property, including all existing and proposed buildings, drawn to scale. For residential projects, this is replaced by a color-coded master plotting plan/development plan showing lot lines, the footprint of homes and any optional accessory structures plotted on each lot, the elevation style of each home, and setbacks from all property lines.

6. Preliminary grading and drainage plan, drawn to scale.
7. Stormwater control plan, drawn to scale, including water treatment calculations.
8. Floor plans of the proposed buildings, or proposed changes to existing buildings, drawn to scale. Identify planned uses in each room or area of each building.
9. Color elevation drawings of the proposed buildings or changes to existing buildings, drawn to scale.
10. Materials board for commercial or multi-family residential projects and color schemes for single-family residential projects.
11. Preliminary landscaping plan, if any is required or proposed.
12. Preliminary title report for the subject property, no more than three months old at the time of submittal.
13. Planning Survey Report if take coverage is required or sought under the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan.
14. For projects that require an initial study to be prepared under CEQA, additional reports may be required, including but not limited to an arborist report (where applicable), biological site survey, cultural resource survey, Phase I environmental site assessment, and traffic study.
15. For projects that are being concurrently processed with a parcel map, subdivision map, conditional use permit, rezone, or General Plan amendment, signage must be posted on the subject property in accordance with Chapter 17.800 of the Brentwood Municipal Code.
16. Flash drive or CD containing all written documents in Word format and all maps/plans in PDF format.
17. Additional hard copies of the plans will be required once a hearing date has been determined.
18. Other information which is pertinent and/or which the Community Development Director may require all applicants to furnish, by general policy.

*Items 4 through 11 are often combined into a single design booklet

Processing Time

- Design review applications are typically processed in 8-12 weeks. Projects involving additional entitlement requests or extensive CEQA review will take longer.
- Administrative design review applications are typically processed in 2-4 weeks.

Public Hearings Required

Design review applications do not require public hearings. However, design review applications being processed concurrently with other entitlement requests requiring public hearings should be publically noticed in conjunction with public hearings for those other requests, including General Plan amendments, rezones, tentative subdivision maps, parcel maps, and conditional use permits. The City is responsible for providing applicable notices to all property owners within 300 feet of the project site, as well as publication in the local newspaper, no less than 10 days from the date of the hearing.

Appeal Process

Decisions made by staff or the Planning Commission are subject to appeal, in accordance with Chapter 17.880 of the Brentwood Municipal Code. In general, decisions of staff become effective 10 calendar days after they are made. Any affected party may appeal a decision made by staff to the Planning Commission by submitting an application and the required appeal fee to the City Clerk during the 10-day appeal period. Decisions of the Planning Commission also become effective 10 calendar days after they are made. Any affected party may appeal a decision of the Planning Commission to the City Council by submitting an application and the required appeal fee to the City Clerk during the 10-day appeal period. Decisions of the City Council are final.